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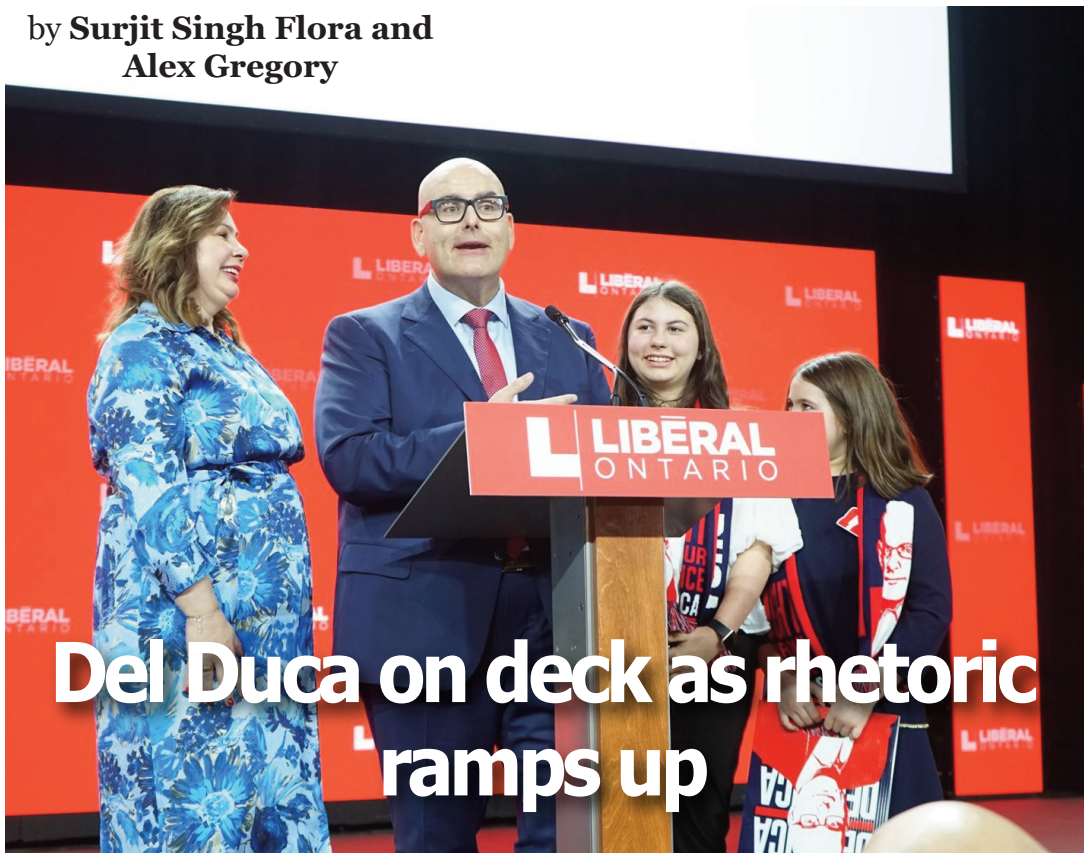
PEEL WEEKLY NEWS
MISSISSAUGA | BRAMPTON | CALEDON
March 9, 2020

by **Surjit Singh Flora and Alex Gregory**



Del Duca on deck as rhetoric ramps up

Newly-minted Ontario Liberal leader Steven Del Duca (centre) speaks, surrounded by members of his family, during a Liberal leadership convention held on Mar. 7, 2020. (Photoi Courtesy of Irfan Malik)

It was less of a race and more of a coronation Saturday afternoon, as Ontario Liberal leadership hopeful Steven Del Duca took a decisive victory during the party's annual convention in Mississauga.

Del Duca, a former MPP and cabinet minister in Kathleen Wynne's government, took a decisive lead and never let up, securing 59 per cent of the vote in the first ballot of the leadership race.

"It's not about me, it's about all of us," Del Duca told more than 3,000 attendees during his victory speech at the International Centre Saturday, after being announced as the winner by party president Brian Johns. "When we're focused, we get the job done."

The work now begins for Del Duca to rebuild the Ontario Liberals, which are sitting at third-place with seven seats, as they seek to take on incumbent Premier Doug Ford and give voters a reason to choose them over the NDP or the Greens in 2022.

The "job" could start as early as Monday, as Del Duca indicated that he would seek to tour the province as soon as possible and work to regain trust with voters. "We lost touch with Queen's Park... we lost touch with people across the province," said Del Duca. "We have a lot of work to regain the trust of people across this province. There are no shortcuts to success, (and) we do have to hit the ground running."

Del Duca served from 2012-2018 as an MPP for Vaughan-Woodbridge, handling economic development and transportation portfolios during his tenure, and lost in the 2018 provincial election to PC candidate Michael Tibollo. Del Duca went on to pick up a total of 1,171 out of a potential 2,084 votes counted from delegates, a far leap over fellow leadership hopeful Michael Coteau's 371 (17 per cent).

The Ontario Liberals have slowly clawed their way back from the brink since 2018, as they continue to overcome fundraising challenges. Last year, the party raised just $970,000, according to donations recorded on the Elections Ontario website. Comparatively, the PCs raked in $4.8 million last year and shows no signs of slowing down, with Ford bringing in more than $2 million earlier this month at his annual leaders' dinner in Toronto.

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Third case of COVID-19 reported in Peel Region

by **Alex Gregory**

The third case of the COVID-19 virus has been reported in the region, following a pair of incidents announced last week, Peel Public Health revealed late Sunday.

Sunday's case involved a 50 year-old male resident who returned from a trip to Germany on Mar. 7, and was admitted to and assessed at Brampton Civic Hospital, a spokesperson said.

"The individual was seen and assessed at Brampton Civic Hospital, and they were discharged home to follow self-isolation protocols," said Kiki Ferrari, William Osler Health System's executive vice president of clinical operations, Sunday night.

"Thanks to the swift and careful actions of our Emergency Department, Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC), and our incident management teams, we were able to take all necessary steps to ensure we protected our staff, physicians, volunteers and community, and that the individual was cared for appropriately and effectively."

The case is an ongoing investigation, said Peel Public Health, who indicated that individuals who had close contact with the infected individual will be contacted directly.

Peel Region's medical officer of health, Dr. Jessica Hopkins, said Sunday that the risk to Peel residents remains low.

"We continue to be well prepared to respond to cases of COVID-19 in Peel. A coordinated system is functioning effectively to manage and contain cases to prevent community transmission," said Hopkins.

The announcement follows two similar cases that were reported late last week.

On Mar. 5, a 60 year-old Mississauga man contracted the virus while taking part in a cruise onboard the Grand Princess Cruise Ship in San Francisco from Feb. 11-21, before returning to Canada on Feb. 28. His spouse was later confirmed as the second case.

The man was seen and assessed at Trillium's Mississauga Hospital, and was later sent home for self-isolation.

The second case, reported late Friday, involved possible exposure from an individual who traveled on several MiWay (Route 108 north), GO Transit (Route 27) and TTC (Yorkdale, Islington and Bathurst) buses or trains from Mar. 2-4.

Peel Public Health said Friday that individuals who rode on any of the indicated lines on Mar. 2, 3 or 4 who are feeling well, with no symptoms, should continue to go about their daily routines and not call Public Health.

The health division also said it was working with the individual's employer to support staff.

Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie said Friday evening that the city was in the process of rolling out an enhanced cleaning program on the MiWay fleet when the case was revealed.

"We are taking all the steps necessary to ensure the safety of both the public and our staff. It's important to remember that the risk to the public of the spread of the virus remains low. Public transit remains safe," said Crombie, who encouraged residents to continue to use MiWay for their daily travels or commute.

Given the global spread of this virus over the last few weeks, a case in Peel was anticipated and pre-emptive measures were in place for such a situation, said Hopkins.

"This case (Friday's) contracted the illness outside of our Region and there remains no community spread to date of COVID-19. In this case, the system worked as intended and through coordinated efforts with our partners, the risk to Peel citizens remains low."

If you develop symptoms, please call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700. If you require emergency medical assistance, please call 911.

There is no evidence of community spread of the virus, PPH said.

One man under arrest after vehicle smashes through bus stop

A male driver is under arrest after his vehicle drove into a Mississauga bus shelter Sunday afternoon, Peel Police have revealed.

The incident took place around 4:35 p.m. on Sunday, when the driver, whose identity wasn't revealed as of press time, drove his vehicle into the bus shelter near the corner of Matheson Boulevard East and Dixie Road.

The car's impact caused several panes of glass in the shelter to shatter, while the seating area was also damaged by the impact.

A 10 year-old girl in the vicinity of the shelter was seriously injured during the crash, and was later taken to a local hospital for treatment. Her injuries are not life-threatening, said police, who are still investigating whether the girl was in the bus shelter or crossing the street at the time of the crash.

Two passengers in the vehicle at the time of the crash were not injured in the incident.

Emergency crews were on the scene Sunday evening working to clean up glass and debris from the shelter. Police said they will be continuing to investigate the matter.

Photo Courtesy of Peel Police

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Rebuilding, branding key focus as Del Duca takes the reins

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The PCs acted quickly minutes after the leadership decision was made, revealing a series of attack ads stating that Ontarians can't afford a "Del Duca-Wynne" and positioning him as the symbol of what drove the provincial Liberals to near-ruin.

During a scrum held after the conference, Del Duca said the PCs were "desperate" to attack him because of their agenda.

"They're desperate because they know that the agenda they are pursuing in this province is reckless," said Del Duca. "It's incompetent their polling numbers reflect that, but that's politics."

Other provincial leaders also reacted to Del Duca's win, with Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath congratulating him before saying she'd "see you on the campaign trail," while Green Party leader Mike Schreiner stated that he was "not sure that someone associated with the old guard of Liberal establishment and embroiled in past controversies can deliver the leadership that Ontario needs."

Del Duca was no stranger to controversy during him time as an MPP, being criticized in a 2018 report released by the province's auditor general for spearheading the construction of a pair of GO Stations, including one located near his riding, against the advice of Metrolinx. Del Duca has also faced criticism for asking the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to cede a section of land that's considered environmentally sensitive, in exchange for giving up a portion of their yard that leads down into a marked potential flood zone.

While Del Duca dodged questions about the swimming pool Saturday, he stated that getting the two GO Stations built was the right move, pointing to population growth metrics not factored in to the analysis generated by Metrolinx as evidence.

PC Markham-Stouffville MPP and House Leader Paul Calendra blasted Del Duca's record after the convention, telling reporters that "(Del Duca) was a cabinet minister for a number of years with Kathleen Wynne, there was a question related to a GO train station he didn't listen to his public service and tried to move it into his riding, and then how could he not know that he couldn't build a swimming pool that backs onto a conservation area?"

Others, including the local branch of the Labourers' International Union of North America (LiUNA) 183, blasted Del Duca for voiding collective and bargaining rights for construction workers during his time in Kathleen Wynne's government, referencing proposed changes to the Labour Relations Act that were buried inside the Liberals' 2018 budget.

"(Del Duca) attacked the hard working men and women who build the province of Ontario," said LiUNA international vice president and central/eastern Canada regional manager Joseph Mancinelli. "He directed an attack on LIUNA members & buried it in a budget. He lost his seat. His lost trust. He lost respect. LIUNA Members will not stand for someone who attacks their earned rights!"

While they may have a new leader, the Liberals will still need time and clarity to heal the divide caused by the Wynne-era government. Strong recruiting for the leadership race led the Liberal membership to surge to 38,000, putting the party in line with its support prior to the 2018 election.

A renewed commitment on party building, recruitment of candidates and fundraising are all likely to be key priorities for Del Duca moving forward, said party insiders.

Not only that, Ontario's Progressive Conservative party is also losing support in PC-held ridings, according to a newly released poll which suggests the government's ongoing war with the province's education unions could jeopardize some MPPs' chances of re-election.

Youth arrested in connection with string of robberies

An 18 year-old Brampton youth is under arrest in connection with a pair of robberies that took place last year in Mississauga and Cambridge, Peel Police have revealed.

The robberies took place on Oct. 19, 2019, investigators from the force's Central Robbery Bureau said Saturday, with the incidents tied into a larger series of robberies committed by several perpetrators operating in the GTA.

The first incident took place around 3:30 p.m. on Oct. 19, 2019, with two suspects entering a bank in Mississauga wearing masks and armed with a handgun. The suspects leapt over the service counter, confronted employees and demanded money before fleeing in a red Audi A4 sedan.

Approximately 45 minutes later, the same suspects entered a bank in Cambridge and attempted a similar action, confronting employees and demanding money. As before, the suspects left the building and fled in their sedan.

No one was physically injured in either incident.

Representatives from the force subsequently arrested a suspect who possessed ammunition for a gun and property related to the offences.

The suspect, who cannot be identified under the Youth Criminal Justice Act, was charged with several offences, including robbery, wearing a disguise and possessing ammunition for a dangerous purpose.

The suspect appeared in Brampton court for a bail hearing on Mar. 7.

Residents who have any additional information regarding the robberies are asked to call the Central Robbery Bureau at (905) 453-2121, ext. 3402.

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Opinion

Bank bills to blame for spread of COVID-19?

Surjit Singh Flora
Column

It seems as if a new story related to the Coronavirus is being released every day, with one major development after another.

The COVID-19 outbreaks have so far impacted more than one million people worldwide, and the number of deaths has increased to almost 3,300.

From 195 countries around the world, 85 so far have been impacted by the virus, with China, Italy, South Korea, and Iran facing the worst of the consequences.

Top U.S. scientists made a statement last week that the Trump administration has instructed them to prepare to deal with the coronavirus.

On Thursday, a global conference on the Coronavirus was held at the Pentagon, with scientists from around the world participating.

At the meeting, Nelson Michael, director of the Center for Infectious Diseases at the Walter Reed Army Institute in the United States, issued new warnings about the global coronavirus. Dr. Nielsen and his colleagues believe that although the number of cases of coronavirus may decrease next month, the world will have to prepare for a "second wave" next winter.

According to scientists, the Virus spreads quickly in the winter and is not right in the summer.

When it comes to developments regarding a potential vaccine, scientific research has so far found that the virus may be a little less communicable in the summer, but it's a mistake to say that the Virus will not stay in hot climates.

Its reach in the warm regions of Singapore and Australia shows that the virus does not spread quickly in the summer, but does not end.

Dr. Michael made it clear at the conference that given the current rate of vaccination against the Coronavirus, it is clear that the planet is unlikely to be prepared if a second wave occurs.

He also said that it was a respiratory virus and that it would be more deadly in winter. In this case, it is doubtful whether it will survive the summer days and reappear in the winter.

"We want to tell all countries in the world that from now on, they must be ready for the second wave," Dr. Michael said.

Efforts have been made by China and Korea to prevent the Virus from spreading, particularly in bank notes and legal tender.

Authorities have used ultraviolet light and high temperatures to sterilize the bills. Only after staying in a fully sealed store for 14 days did the bills come into circulation.

Sources in the Bank of England say there are currently no plans for the same procedures China or Korea undertook to be performed in Britain. The World Health Organization (WHO) has also publicly said that people in Britain should exercise caution when infected bills are taken into their hands.

When asked if bank bills could also cause the Coronavirus to spread, the short answer from the WHO was - yes, it is possible.

We know how money goes hand-in-hand with infection, and how it can be infected with many kinds of germs or viruses at any time.

Representatives with WHO further advised people to wash their hands thoroughly and avoid touching their mouths after being exposed to bank bills.

Where possible, a cashless transaction should be performed.

New information also came to light last week that COVID-19 could survive for up to nine days outside the human body.

Until now, it had not been proven how long a new coronavirus can survive outside the human body. Based on 22 separate studies, including those linked to SARS and MARS, the General of Hospital Infection stated that the human Coronavirus can survive for up to nine days at room temperature. However, it is also true that after using insecticide, as well as at high temperatures, the Virus immediately disappears.

The death toll from this virus is also not decreasing. There have also been some shocking cases of coronavirus in China.

According to a report, some people lost their lives even after recovering from a Coronavirus infection. One of the individuals was discharged from the hospital, but died a few days after being released. The patient's age and potential underlying health factors are currently unknown.

Coronavirus cases seem to be changing. In many cases, those recovered from the coronavirus infection were once again engulfed by the virus. The aforementioned patient recovered, but was tested positive again for a virus infection.

Shanghai's news portal, 'The Paper,' has given shocking information about it. The 36-year-old man was admitted to a hospital in Wuhan for the Coronavirus. The hospital discharged the man after he was cured, but died five days after being discharged.

The man, Li Liang, was admitted to the hospital on Feb. 12, showing mild-to-moderate symptoms of the virus.

Liang's wife, Mei, said that Li was discharged from the hospital two weeks after being admitted to the hospital. He was advised to stay in a hotel for at least 14 days.

Two days after discharge from the hospital, Li's health began to deteriorate. On Mar. 2, he fell ill again. He was taken to the hospital again but succumbed to his illness. Doctors later confirmed presence of the Coronavirus infection in Li's body.

People are still getting sick again after recovering from a coronavirus infection. Wuhan's doctors are also confirming that many patients have to be hospitalized again. They came out of the infection once, but once they were discharged, the symptoms of the virus started to appear again.

There are several patients in Wuhan who were discharged from the hospital after recovering from the infection, but after a few days, they were found to be positive for a viral infection, then had to be hospitalized again.

It remains to be seen exactly how the Coronavirus epidemic will pan out over the coming days and weeks, but it is important for residents to exercise caution and practice healthy hygiene habits.

After all, you can't put a price on your own health.

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